

The Site of the  
Dead Sea Scrolls:  
Archaeological  
Interpretations  
and Debates

*Edited by*

KATHARINA GALOR,

JEAN-BAPTISTE HUMBERT &

JÜRGEN ZANGENBERG



Qumran

The Site of the Dead Sea Scrolls:  
Archaeological Interpretations and Debates

# Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah

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Qumran  
The Site of the Dead Sea Scrolls:  
Archaeological Interpretations and Debates

Proceedings of a Conference held at Brown University,  
November 17–19, 2002

*Edited by*  
Katharina Galor, Jean-Baptiste Humbert, and Jürgen Zangenberg



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## FOREWORD

John J. Collins

For several years now, a debate has been raging about the archaeological interpretation of the Qumran site. For forty years or so, the interpretation proposed by the excavator, Roland de Vaux, stood virtually unchallenged, and the few vocal dissenters lacked credibility because they were not professional archaeologists. Since the early 1990s, however, the landscape has changed. In some part, the changes may be attributed to the intellectual climate at the turn of the millennium, specifically to the post-modern suspicion of consensus and hegemonic narratives. But in some part they are also due to new data. The rapid publication of the fragmentary texts from Cave 4 over the last decade has complicated our understanding of the sectarian community known from the original finds in Cave 1. At the same time, the renewed publication of the material left behind by de Vaux has provided new data for archaeologists, as have various new surveys and excavations in and around Qumran and at other sites around the Dead Sea. It does not appear that any new consensus has emerged, nor, indeed, that the main lines of de Vaux's interpretation have been disproved. But questions that were once thought settled have been reopened, and we can anticipate that this will be an area of lively debate for years to come.

Katharina Galor, Jean-Baptiste Humbert, and Jürgen Zangenberg have rendered a great service to scholarship by bringing together in a single volume a wide spectrum of views from the current debate. In so doing, they have provided a necessary complement to the recent syntheses by Jodi Magness and Yizhar Hirschfeld. The debate cannot easily be reduced to binary alternatives. While Magness's book provides an exceptionally lucid and compelling statement of the Essene interpretation, there are other variations of the sectarian hypothesis on offer. Among those who question that interpretation, there is much less consensus. While the proposals of the Donceels and of Hirschfeld are most widely known, they do not appear to have commanded wide assent, even among those who reject de Vaux's interpretation, and other proposals continue to emerge. Perhaps the clearest contribution of the "dissidents" to the debate is their insistence on the regional context of Qumran. Relationships between Qumran and Jericho, or Qumran and Hasmonean fortifications, as well as analogies between the cemetery at Qumran and the newly discovered one at Khirbet Qazone, must all be taken into account as surely as the scrolls that were found within a stone's throw of the site. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that regional contacts do not rule out the possibility of a sectarian settlement. Much of the debate has been skewed by unrealistic assumptions about the degree of isolation that such a settlement would have required. The archaeological debate should prompt textually oriented scholars to go back to the scrolls and examine more carefully the kind(s) of community that are envisioned in the sectarian rule books.

Archaeology, like all historical study, is by its nature unfinished business. The certitudes of today may be overturned by tomorrow's excavation. The current debate about the site of Qumran is to be welcomed. Where there is no debate, assumptions harden into dogmas, and dogma is the enemy of historical understanding. Our thanks are due to the editors for an exceptionally stimulating volume that should encourage students of all persuasions to look again at the evidence with fresh questions.





## ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , 6 Volumes (Edited by D.N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992).
ADA $\int$	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan</i>
Ag.Ap.	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i>
Ant.	Josephus Flavius, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
ANYAS	Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BAR.IS	British Archaeological Reports. International Series.
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
EB	Études Bibliques
EDSS	<i>Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> (Edited by L.H. Schiffman and J.C. VanderKam; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
EI	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
ESI	<i>Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i>
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IE $\int$	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IFAPO	Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JDS	Judaean Desert Studies
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JRA	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
JRA.SS	Journal of Roman Archaeology. Supplementary Series.
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSJ.S	Journal for the Study of Judaism. Supplement.
JSOT/ASOR.MS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament/American Schools of Oriental Research. Monograph Series.
JSOT.SS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplementary Series.
JSP	Judea and Samaria Publications
JSP.SS	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha. Supplement Series.
J.W.	Josephus Flavius, <i>The Jewish War</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones and R. McKenzie, <i>Greek-English Lexicon. With a Revised Supplement</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).
NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>

<i>NEAEHL</i>	<i>New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land.</i> 4 Volumes (Edited by E. Stern; Jerusalem: Carta and Israel Exploration Society, 1993).
NTOA.SA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus. Series Archaeologica.
<i>OEANE</i>	<i>The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East.</i> 5 Volumes (Edited by Eric M. Meyers; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
<i>PEFQS</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration [Fund] Quarterly Statement</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PL	Patrologia Latina (J.-P. Migne)
<i>PRE</i>	<i>Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft.</i> 24 Volumes (Stuttgart, J.B. Metzler, 1894–1963)
<i>Qad</i>	<i>Qadmoniot</i>
<i>QC</i>	<i>The Qumran Chronicle</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
SBF.CMa	Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Collectio Maior.
SBL.DS	Society of Biblical Literature. Dissertation Series.
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SNTS.MS	Society for New Testament Studies. Monograph Series.
SPB	Studia Post-Biblica
<i>TA</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

## QUMRAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN SEARCH OF A CONSENSUS

Katharina Galor and Jürgen Zangenberg

It is with great pride and gratitude that we present the proceedings of the conference entitled “Qumran—The Site of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Archaeological Interpretations and Debates,” held November 17–19, 2002 at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. To the best of our knowledge, this conference was the first international and interdisciplinary convention in which the archaeology of Khirbet Qumran and of the surrounding region constituted the primary focus instead of the scrolls or scroll-related topics.<sup>1</sup> With this collection of papers, we hope to balance a certain preponderance of text-related discussions that have outweighed the results of Qumran research. Of course, anyone familiar with this research, may immediately object that one cannot be properly assessed without the other. This is certainly true, and none of the conference participants would want to artificially separate the Qumran texts from their archaeological context or vice versa. Important discoveries at the site in recent years and an ever-increasing interest in the archaeology of the Dead Sea region justify a hard look at the archaeological record.

### I

The scholarly consensus continues to be dominated, as it has been for many years, by the classic model put forward by Roland de Vaux in his magisterial *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*,<sup>2</sup> in which he states that texts and archaeology complement each other within an interpretive framework shaped by the reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls and ancient writings by authors such as

Philo, Pliny, and Josephus. Those who adopt this approach assume that the Qumran site was built and inhabited by the same Essenes who were also responsible for collecting and hiding the large library discovered in caves close to the site.

Today, the question seems much more open, and, as a result, the situation is more complex for a number of reasons. First of all, scroll research has paved the way for new readings of key texts. This provides room for a critical assessment of how sectarian many Qumran texts actually were and has enabled scholars to decide if and how a given text may or may not have been formative in the life of the Qumran community. The ideas that de Vaux and his generation still were able to take for granted (e.g., the historicity and character of the Teacher of Righteousness or models about the origins of the sect) have become more difficult to work with. Even if the majority of scholars agree on the classic Qumran-Essene hypothesis in general, individual theories differ in many ways. The mainstreamers present a wide array of sometimes competing and often even partly contradicting options for some of the most contested issues. The “old consensus,” therefore, is not a monolith that one could easily turn against an allegedly confusing and confused flock of dissenters.<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, one can justifiably ask to what extent de Vaux’s model was dependent upon the fact that he had far fewer texts available to develop his theory than we have today. This is due to the tremendous progress made in the publication (not the least thanks to international efforts under the directorship of Emanuel Tov) and discussion of the textual corpus.

<sup>1</sup> A report about the conference was published in J. Zangenberg and K. Galor, “Qumran Archaeology in Transition: Remarks on the International Conference ‘Qumran—The Site of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Archaeological Interpretations and Debates,’ Nov. 17–19, 2002 at Brown University, Providence RI.” *QC* 11 (2003): 1–6.

<sup>2</sup> R. de Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London:

Oxford University Press, for the British Academy, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> Thus, e.g., M. Broshi and H. Eshel, “Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Contention of Twelve Theories.” In: *Religion and Society in Roman Palestine: Old Questions, New Approaches* (Edited by D.R. Edwards; New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 162–9.

It is ironic that new ideas from textual research were needed to open up a new chapter in Qumran archaeology—the archaeology of the site has always stood in the shadow of textual research. This time, however, the texts have helped to emancipate archaeology. In the late 1980s and early 1990s (a turbulent time in Qumran research), when many scholars pressed for swift publication of still unpublished texts and the first dissenting voices were raised about the Essene character of the site, the archaeological remains of the site gained renewed interest. At that time, the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem restarted the publication process. Scholars began to catalogue, reassess, and publish the archaeological material that de Vaux had left behind before he was able to complete his final report. The decision to delay the publishing of the final report was not due to a lack of interest in the material or, as some have claimed, a desire to keep the results away from the wider scholarly community, but was rather a position taken by the European diplomatic community in 1967.

Given the complicated political matters involved, scholars recommended waiting for a resolution of the sensitive crisis. Could Israel claim the scrolls and the site as part of its own cultural heritage, despite the fact that at the time of their discovery both were found in territory under Jordanian rule? However, as international scholarly pressure to publish the material from the original de Vaux excavation increased, those ethical-political issues were relegated to the background and the director of the École Biblique decided to re-address the task of the final report, appointing Jean-Baptiste Humbert to lead in its undertaking.

Humbert was the first to highlight the secular character of the building complex at Qumran, which he attributed to the first, Hasmonean, phase of the site's settlement.<sup>4</sup> Although he maintained a traditional interpretation of the complex during a second or later stage, returning once more to

the idea of an Essene occupation, his views were considered groundbreaking. Additional results of the renewed research and publication activity initiated by the École Biblique electrified the scholarly community, especially the suggestions made by the Belgian archaeologists Robert Donceel and Pauline Donceel-Voûte, who in 1989 worked with the French École Biblique research team. Concluding their collaboration in 1990, they continued their research independently. Not only did they discover that excavated materials which had been overlooked or disregarded during the formative years of research were still present, but they also analyzed Qumran not along the traditional lines of textual reference but according to accepted archaeological methods of analogy and context with contemporaneous regional material culture. Instead of confirming the traditional picture of Qumran as the center of a sectarian community, they proposed an agricultural settlement (initially adopting the problematic term of “*villa rustica*”) without any particular sectarian profile, thus challenging the very core of the de Vauxian model.<sup>5</sup> In light of their research we might justifiably question the extent to which de Vaux's model depended on the select groups of material evidence he chose to publish and those elements he ignored. Although at that time the vast majority of scholars swiftly rejected the approach and results of the Belgian team, Robert Donceel and Pauline Donceel-Voûte have set the agenda for today's discussion by pursuing archaeological methods when interpreting an archaeological site—and Qumran certainly *is* such a site.

So, what constitutes the prime point of reference for the interpretation of Qumran? Should one study the site on the basis of analogies, just like any other settlement? Or should one acknowledge the site's exclusivity and uniqueness due to its intrinsically religious context based on the closeness of the scrolls? It is exactly this question of the relationship between the Dead Sea texts and

<sup>4</sup> See J.-B. Humbert, “L'espace sacré à Qumrân: Propositions pour l'archéologie.” *RB* 101 (1994): 161–214; Humbert, “Qumrân, esséniens et architecture.” In: *Antikes Judentum und frühes Christentum. Festschrift für H. Stegemann* (Edited by B. Kollmann et al.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 183–200.

<sup>5</sup> R. Donceel, “Reprise des travaux de publication des fouilles au Khirbet Qumran.” *RB* 99 (1992): 557–73; R. Donceel and P. Donceel-Voûte, “The Archaeology of Qumran.” In: *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and*

*the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects.* ANYAS 722 (Edited by M.O. Wise et al.; New York: Academy of Sciences, 1994), 1–38; id., “Poursuite des travaux de publication du matériel archéologique de Khirbet Qumran: Les lampes en terre-cuite.” In: *Mogilany 1995. Papers on the Dead Sea Scrolls Offered in Memory of Aleksy Klawek.* *Qumranica Mogilanensia* 15 (Edited by Z.J. Kapera; Cracow: Enigma, 1998), 87–104.

the archaeology of Khirbet Qumran which has become increasingly significant as more and more archaeological data from Qumran and the surrounding region has become available in recent years.

It is, therefore, no surprise that this issue also dominated many papers presented at the conference and that it frequently resurfaces in the articles of this volume. The issue is certainly still far from settled, and it was one of the objectives of the conference to bring scholars of competing approaches together to help exchange and refine positions and to promote a dialogue. Apart from these methodological questions, Qumran archaeology has benefited from the publication of new data—just as scroll research has intensified as new texts have become available since the early 1990s. After renewed publication efforts by the École, a most significant new set of data came from the Qumran cemetery. The material was analyzed and published by two teams, one led by Olav Röhrer-Ertl and one by Susan G. Sheridan. These investigations immediately triggered a hot debate about the character of the cemetery and the extent to which the new material supported or rejected the traditional model. In the meantime, research on the cemetery has continued and has yielded, among other data, the first accurate map.<sup>6</sup> Gradually scholars have intensified the trend already present *in nuce* in de Vaux's work to systematically include material from neighboring sites in their assessment of Qumran. The perception of the region, which de Vaux initially regarded as isolated and deserted, has completely changed and now increasingly functions as a transformed contextual framework of reference for the Qumran site.<sup>7</sup>

Many surveys and excavations have been undertaken near Qumran in the last 10–15 years and

at other sites around the Dead Sea,<sup>8</sup> resulting in a considerable increase in available information. The new data includes palaeobotanical and palaeoenvironmental information, which also contributes to a profoundly revised, much more reliable, and less romantic picture of the world around Qumran. Especially important is the publication of extensive archaeological work carried out between 1973 and 1987 under the directorship of Ehud Netzer at the Hasmonean and Herodian royal estates at Jericho. Intriguing comparisons between Qumran and Jericho in their ceramics and architecture raise further questions about the interpretation of Qumran. Recently, David Stacey stated that if “Qumran had been discovered today, its possible relationship to the estate could not be ignored.”<sup>9</sup> It was, therefore, a welcome coincidence that only a few weeks prior to the conference volume III of the Jericho excavation reports containing Rachel Bar-Nathan's extensive report on ceramic finds from Jericho, was published.<sup>10</sup> Her study of the Masada pottery, submitted to press in the summer of 2004, will provide a much needed, additional reference for a comparative regional database for the Qumran pottery.

But the picture is still far from complete. As stated by many authors in this volume, any scholar dealing with the archaeology of Qumran and archaeology at large must work with insufficient and incomplete data. This situation impacts all theorists: the mainstreamers, the rebels, and the iconoclasts alike. In this respect, the conference also provided a stage for updating the public about the current state of the official publication project of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem under the directorship of Jean-Baptiste Humbert.

The publication program's first volume, *Qumran I*, was published in 1994. Its focus was the

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., H. Eshel et al., “New Data on the Cemetery East of Qumran.” *DSD* 9 (2002): 135–65. Richard Freund presented a paper on this topic at the Brown conference (see Appendix).

<sup>7</sup> In late 2004, Yizhar Hirschfeld published a book that uses the regional context of Qumran as an interpretive framework (*Qumran in Context: Reassessing the Archaeological Evidence* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004]), offering for the first time a systematic, archaeologically based alternative to the traditional text-based model that was recently eloquently defended by the synthesis of J. Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> See especially *Surveys and Excavations of Caves in the Northern Judean Desert (C.NJD)—1993*. ‘Atiqot 41/1 and 41/2

(Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> D. Stacey, “Some Notes on the Archaeological Context of Qumran in the Light of Recent Publications” from June 2004, accessed 08.08.2005 at [www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Stacey\\_Qumran\\_Light\\_of\\_Recent\\_Publications.htm](http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Stacey_Qumran_Light_of_Recent_Publications.htm).

<sup>10</sup> R. Bar-Nathan, *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho: Final Reports of the 1973–1987 Excavations. Vol. 3: The Pottery* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2002). Volumes 1 (2001) and 2 (2004) contain reports on the stratigraphy and architecture of the palaces and discuss the infrastructure and economic basis of the estate. A systematic study of Qumran in the light of the vast material from Jericho has not yet been undertaken and is an urgent desideratum.

excavation diaries of Roland de Vaux in French and a large selection of photographs and plans. This volume has become a classic and an indispensable tool for Qumran research. Soon translated into German by Ferdinand Rohrhirsch and Barbara Hofmair and supplemented with analytical charts, *Qumran Ia* was published in 1996. *Qumran I* was recently revised and translated into English by Stephen Pfann, *Qumran Ib*, 2003. A second volume, *Qumran II*, co-edited by Jean-Baptiste Humbert and Jan Gunneweg and dedicated to natural-scientific reports and socio-anthropological studies, was published in December of 2003. This publication is a successful effort to combine scientific methods from the fields of the natural and social sciences, and, most importantly, marks the joint efforts of an international team of researchers from Europe, Israel, and the United States under the joint supervision of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française and the Hebrew University to publish the archaeological material housed at the École Biblique. A third volume, *Qumran III*, dedicated to the pottery, metal, and other small finds from de Vaux's excavations, as well as a reconstruction of the site's stratigraphy, is in the final stages of preparation. The Qumran series is an encouraging and most welcome sign for a new trend of cooperation. Today, the direction of Qumran research is clearly different in respect to accessing the original excavated material.

To summarize, within the context of Qumran research, archaeology was originally relegated to a secondary position relative to text-oriented studies; however, it has definitely established itself as an independent, related source in its own right *with* the texts for the interpretation of Khirbet Qumran. It is clear that both archaeology and texts must be taken into account.

## II

We are grateful to the authors whose ideas appear in the present volume.<sup>11</sup> All 15 articles published here are not only evidence of the increasingly

controversial debate about the nature of Qumran, but, more importantly, also demonstrate the potential of new investigations using both traditional and innovative tools and approaches. Given the nature and scope of the contributions, the volume is divided into four sections. A first section presents basic examinations of archaeological material excavated during various stages of Qumran research. In the first article of this section, Jean-Baptiste Humbert follows up his 1994 proposition of Qumran as a site comprising both secular and religious features. Based on his continuous work on the archive housed at the École Biblique, Humbert refines this argument using careful stratigraphical and architectural observations and a critical evaluation of suggestions made by de Vaux, Magness, and Pfann on the building history and the function of several crucial elements of the settlement. In Humbert's view, Qumran should be considered, at least in its last phase, as a "religious center for a Jewish sect living around the Dead Sea." Humbert's insistence on an inductive method when interpreting Qumran, starting with what we see on the ground, instead of deducing the facts from an overall theory, is not new, but definitely constitutes an important perspective for Qumran research.

In the second paper, James F. Strange presents a detailed report of geophysical examinations, including ground-penetrating radar [GPR] and ground resistivity tests, that he conducted on the plateau south of the main settlement at Qumran to detect and measure possible subterranean cavities in the marl terrace. While Strange succeeded in identifying such cavities, a relatively high degree of uncertainty remains with respect to their size, nature, and exact location. Instead of finding undiscovered scroll caves, he clearly demonstrates that the plateau itself must be considered as archaeological space preserving important traces of human activity. Strange emphasizes the fact that "there is as much to be learned from further archaeological excavations of the Qumran plateau as from the ruin itself." The flow of water through the terrace, the character of habitation on the plateau surface, and the related change in soil resistivity

<sup>11</sup> See the list of papers read at the conference in the Appendix. The paper by Jodi Magness, "Why Scroll Jars?" is now published in Edwards 2004, 146–61. We are grate-

ful to Joseph Patrich and Konstantinos D. Politis, who were unable to attend the conference, for contributing the results of their research to this volume.

are among the issues which require further analyses and cooperation between archaeologists and natural scientists. Strange also adds a comment about the terrace contexts where in 1996 two ostraca chance finds were recovered.

New material will inevitably trigger new questions and open up new perspectives. This is definitely the case with Yitzhak Magen's and Yuval Peleg's extensive preliminary report on archaeological excavations in and around Qumran conducted between 1993 and 2004 under the auspices of the Staff Officer for Archaeology in Judea and Samaria. The importance of these excavations can hardly be overstated since they provide us with the first comprehensive set of archaeological data that is independent of de Vaux's often problematic documentation and incomplete publication. Magen and Peleg demonstrate that a considerably wider variety of artifacts and finds were present at Qumran than the ones presented in de Vaux's reports. Based on their own stratigraphic observations, they provide a quite different reconstruction of the function of the building and its construction history. Magen and Peleg break new ground in the truest sense.

As long as the final reports of de Vaux's excavations remain unpublished and his conclusions proposed in *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* cannot fully be checked against the original documentation of the actual finds, we will have to turn to Magen and Peleg for the most reliable and complete picture of the Qumran material culture—its imported pottery, glass, and metal artifacts. The early summary reports of the Donceels in the 1990s clearly indicated that de Vaux had recovered considerably more material than he incorporated into his Essene-Qumran hypothesis. Future discussions will have to deal with the question of how our current view of Qumran is the direct result of deliberate choices about which finds were published. The material presented by Magen and Peleg cannot neatly be divided between an "Essene" phase and a "non-Essene" phase, to which all aberrant evidence disturbing the traditional theory often is relegated. Magen and Peleg reject any religious motivation behind the construction of Qumran. Instead of it being a sectarian settlement, they clearly demonstrate that Qumran was an integral part of the regional economy and probably functioned as a pottery production center. Thus, the more archaeological

material becomes available, the less unique and isolated Qumran becomes. As press reports from Israeli newspapers circulating in August 2004 indicate, the discussion of the impact this new material will have on Qumran archaeology has already begun.

The second section of the book presents a wide array of studies devoted to various issues of interpreting Qumran architecture, of activities taking place at different stages of its occupation, and of their historical and ideological context. Joan Branham carefully examines the role of the terrace wall to the east of the settlement. Employing methods of modern social-anthropology she demonstrates how this architectural feature marked a partition between profane and sacred space at Qumran. The terrace wall separated the space of the dead from the space of the living, dividing the impure from the pure; and she also "posits Qumran itself as a liminal threshold for those seeking transition, spiritually or ritually, from an imperfect world to one more halakhically resolute." Branham presents a fascinating example of how "raw" architecture can tell us about the ideology guiding its architects.

In her article on "Period III" Qumran (the so-called "post-Essene" or "Roman" phase), Joan E. Taylor tackles a chapter of the archaeology and history of Qumran that has not yet received the attention it deserves. Working through de Vaux's documentation of the period III remains as well as numismatic and literary sources, Taylor critically assesses the chronology of the destruction and reoccupation of the site and discusses the character of its inhabitants and its economic function within the region.

Chronology is also at the center of Gregory L. Doudna's paper, which challenges the almost universal consensus (even shared by those who doubt that Qumran was genuinely Essene) that the scrolls were deposited in the wake of the Roman conquest of Judea in 68 C.E.—a "chimera" in his words. Doudna's analysis of the published contexts of relevant types of Qumran phase II "scroll jars" generally associated with the deposition of scrolls near Qumran led him to the conclusion that none of these types is datable with confidence to the 1st c. C.E. (Qumran phase II), but rather point to a date close to the end of the 1st c. B.C.E. (Qumran phase Ib). According to Doudna, internal observations on the texts and radiocarbon



dates also suggest that the texts found in caves at Qumran were authored, copied, and hidden in Period Ib, not II—a hypothesis that has already stirred up much controversy and will certainly continue to do so.

Stephen J. Pfann follows quite another path in his analysis of the famous pottery deposits in the “pantries” of loci 89 and 114. After eloquently defending the traditional hypothesis that the Essenes built and inhabited Qumran and that these Essenes engaged in agriculture, Pfann examines the ratio of the different types of tableware found in the pantries, the architecture of these rooms, the division of sacred space around and within the settlement, and the production and consumption of food in Qumran. Furthermore, he provides a useful survey of all foodstuffs known to have been grown or processed at Qumran. Pfann’s comprehensive analysis of historical, literary, and archaeological sources shows how much the inhabitants of Qumran regarded food as a divine gift. By observing ritual in their lives, the Qumran community was guided through the wilderness.

The third section of this volume focuses on an element of Qumran archaeology that has had a long history of controversy—the tombs. Debates began when de Vaux’s preliminary reports were the sole basis for analysis and no material was available for proper examination. Tombs are usually assumed to reflect the way of life of a given community. The biological composition, social stratification, and ideology of the group found in the cemetery naturally attracted considerable attention and was often used to support the traditional theory of an isolated, exclusively male (sometimes even celibate), ascetic community. Most of the human remains excavated at Qumran come from de Vaux’s expedition; however, no comprehensive anthropological report was ever published by the excavator. The material was thought to be lost, but reappeared in the late 1990s in collections in Munich (*Collectio Kurth*), Paris, and Jerusalem. In the first article of this section, Olav Röhrer-Ertl presents the results of his painstaking analysis of the anthropological remains from the *Collectio Kurth* with respect to the layout of the cemetery, the physical and biological constitution of the 21 individuals from 18 graves, and their social and economic context. Röhrer-Ertl sees no reason to exclude the seven females and six chil-

dren identified in the material from the original cemetery as recent Bedouin burials. He maintains that the individuals were probably genetically related and belonged to an upper stratum of a local society. Additional observations relating to the natural environment of Qumran and the economic base of its inhabitants result in a picture that, although quite at odds with the assumptions of the majority of Qumran scholars, should not be dismissed. These analyses add important data to our understanding of the site.

Apart from Röhrer-Ertl, only Susan G. Sheridan had the opportunity to intensively work with the original material excavated by de Vaux. In 2002 she published her analysis of the French and Jerusalem collections. In the conference article, written together with Jaime Ullinger, Sheridan reexamines these data on the basis of recently published notes by Roland de Vaux and Henri Vallois, the anthropologists first entrusted with the analysis. Sheridan and Ullinger caution anyone attempting to use the French collection or any other burial assemblage from Qumran from extrapolating “a larger community profile,” given its random composition and its particularly poor state of preservation.

The article by Konstantinos D. Politis takes us to the eastern shore of the Dead Sea and places the Qumran cemetery in its proper context. The preliminary reports on Politis’ excavations at the vast cemetery of Khirbet Qazone have triggered a lively debate about the uniqueness of the Qumran cemetery and the possible Essene background of the north-south oriented shaft tombs seemingly so characteristic of Qumran. Qazone provides layouts of shaft tombs similar to those at Qumran, thus constituting a fitting reference from the same region and roughly the same time period. The excavations at Qazone are useful in illustrating that many features found at Qumran were only considered unique because no parallels had been found at the time the formative model for the interpretation of Qumran was created. Politis’ article is a good example of how much the process of understanding archaeological features is based on comparison and the observation of analogies and differences. Despite its differences in detail, the cemetery at Khirbet Qazone will continue to exert an impact on Qumran archaeology.

The article by Yizhar Hirschfeld opens the fourth section, which contains studies dealing with

the regional context of Qumran. Hirschfeld, one of the critics of the traditional Qumran-Essene hypothesis, evaluates archaeological material from neighboring sites, the topography of Qumran, and various installations. He concludes that Qumran does not agree with the description of the Essenes in ancient sources like Pliny. Qumran, Hirschfeld posits, was strategically located and functioned within the framework of a specialized regional economy.

Of course, the fact that the Qumranites were engaged in agricultural and economic activity does not *a priori* preclude the possibility that they were Essenes. Stephen Pfann has demonstrated in his article the importance of food and food production for the community. Joseph Patrich also supports the traditional equation of Qumranites with Essenes and surveys the literary and archaeological evidence for the highly developed balsam industry in the Dead Sea region. The importance of balsam for Qumran has been an ongoing debate in recent years.<sup>12</sup> Patrich not only provides necessary background information about balsam production, but also questions whether balsam was produced at Qumran. He remains skeptical that the Qumran installations were connected with the balsam industry and interprets them rather in the context of processing dates. The main problem for any comparative analysis of possible balsam installations at Qumran is that we still do not know enough about what a balsam plant looked like in antiquity! Archaeological analysis requires reference points for comparison, and where they are lacking, interpretations remain uncertain.

Many scholars stress that the scrolls themselves constitute archaeological remains because they were found in proximity to the site. Interpreting the site without the scrolls means—in their view—deliberately ignoring one of its most precious sets of archaeological data. Hanan Eshel and Magen Broshi are among the defenders of this theory. In their article, they survey the evidence of agricultural activity in and around Qumran and conclude that while there is ample evidence for intensive agricultural activity in ‘Ain Feshkha, in Qumran itself no agriculture could have existed. In their view, the purpose of the site, therefore,

cannot have been a result of economic considerations, but should be seen in connection with religious implications of the scrolls. Pfann, Patrich, and Eshel/Broshi, in their own ways, raise issues of regional and local economies. These issues will remain an integral part of the debate about the purpose of the Qumran site and the character of its inhabitants. While agriculture might have been impossible to pursue at Qumran itself (a position which is decisively countered by several other scholars), Eshel’s and Broshi’s observation does not preclude the possibility that Qumran still served a very specific role within a regional agricultural context. As Pfann so aptly states at the end of his article: “There are those who say that farmers lived at Qumran and therefore Essenes did not. Others say that Essenes lived at Qumran and therefore farmers did not.” He is correct in underlining that the religious character of the inhabitants does not contradict agricultural activity *per se*. Is it time to think about other alternatives? It is the *degree* and *character* of agricultural activity that will prove essential for a reassessment of the community’s activities. New material published by Magen and Peleg provides additional arguments for those who maintain that agricultural activity in Qumran was not restricted to fellow sectarians or even Jews in general, but transcended religious and ethnic boundaries. The fact that agricultural activity *was* pursued at Qumran is not surprising, nor should it be a matter of dispute, rather the question is what *kind* and what *range* of agricultural activity can be reconstructed from the available archaeological data. Here one should recall what Humbert stressed in his paper—that the prime sources for an archaeological interpretation are archaeological data and that texts should only come into play after the archaeological evidence has been properly assessed. Future discussion will have to deal with material culture from Qumran that is virtually indistinguishable from neighboring sites. We look forward to a better understanding of how the issue impacts the archaeological evidence and correlations between the Qumran texts and the Qumran-Essene theory. Instead of dismissing the archaeological evidence, we must continue to reassess what is meant when we refer

<sup>12</sup> See now also F.N. Hepper and J.E. Taylor, “Date Palms and Opobalsam in the Madaba Mosaic Map.” *PEQ* 136 (2004): 35–44.

to ‘Essenes.’ It becomes increasingly difficult to realign the archaeological evidence with the view of many texts that the group intentionally separated itself from the outside world.

Central to Mireille Bélis’ article is the agricultural settlement of ‘Ain Feshkha, which has been integral to Qumran.<sup>13</sup> After having intensively studied the textiles from Qumran—their weaving, fabric, and dyeing—Bélis analyzes the industrial installations at ‘Ain Feshkha and compares them with seventeenth/eighteenth century colonial indigo factories. The striking parallels to relevant literary sources lead her to the conclusion that ‘Ain Feshkha most likely served as an indigo factory, providing an interesting alternative to other interpretations, such as a balsam or date wine production site. If ‘Ain Feshkha, indeed, served as an indigo plant, Bélis states that this would also explain why so many textiles found at Qumran were dyed with such high-quality indigo.

On behalf of the École Biblique, Rachel Bar-Nathan’s submission compares the ceramic assemblage from Qumran with the vast corpus from neighboring Jericho. Her conclusions are ground breaking, and, in many ways, support crucial observations made by Magen and Peleg. Bar-Nathan discovered a striking similarity between Jericho and Qumran, starting at the time of Herod, in all aspects of pottery types and distribution, and stresses that imported wares at both sites confirm that Qumran was an integral part of the regional economic network. Differing greatly from previous ceramic analyses, Bar-Nathan finds no evidence that the inhabitants of Qumran practiced a deliberate and selective policy of isolation, or that they followed any specific purity concerns when manufacturing their ceramics. She, rather, believes that Qumran may even have produced pottery for a regional market.

### III

So, what does it mean in the end to treat Qumran as an archaeological site? No consensus was

reached during the conference given the wide gulfs between incompatible methodological approaches. One obvious need is that questions relating to methodology receive more attention. We know that various scholars use evidence in different ways; however, real progress in clarifying *why*, *when*, and *what* evidence is relevant for the argument has yet to be made. Here, Qumran archaeology can only benefit from methodological discourses pursued in archaeology. Many of the issues discussed at the conference and presented in this volume have already been addressed by Norman Golb, Robert Donceel, and Pauline Donceel-Voûte at a time when Qumran research was still comfortably speaking a single language. Times have certainly changed. Can we regain our “common language”? Perhaps it is good that for a certain time there is more controversy than consensus, more confusion than comfort. Even if an exchange of ideas with a scholar holding an opposing view is at times difficult, we should not cease dialogue. The deep differences in our approaches force all of us to reassess our own position. In this respect, too, Qumran archaeology is a hermeneutical enterprise.

Finally, the material record is constantly becoming better understood and analyzed and new data is becoming available thanks to the efforts of many colleagues. Thus, the situation today is fundamentally different from the beginning of the 1990s when, due to the lack of relevant primary data, examining Qumran archaeology inevitably meant either adopting or rejecting de Vaux’s interpretation. It would be anachronistic, maybe even naïve, to expect that a model developed 50 years ago can address and integrate all these new data without considerable revision. The study of the Qumran texts after the tremendous increase of material since the early 1990s has shown the difficulty of integrating all these new data into assumptions and theories devoted to the Essene character of the literary corpus, and the process is far from concluded. Just as in the field of textual studies, the quest for an archaeological understanding of Qumran will have to allow for more

<sup>13</sup> See the report on recent archaeological investigations by Y. Hirschfeld, “Excavations at ‘Ein Feshkha, 2001: Final Report.” *IEJ* 54 (2004): 37–74, who reiterates his opinion that ‘Ain Feshkha was used for the production of balsam

perfume essence. For a contrary view, see now E. Netzer, “Did Any Perfume Industry Exist at ‘Ein Feshkha?” *IEJ* 55 (2005): 97–100.

complexity, more uncertainty, and more discussion; it will also have to live with elements of aberrant, contradictory evidence. The world of Qumran archaeology is and will remain an exciting field for further research.

The organizers of the Brown Conference and editors of the present volume hope that they have fostered continued dialogue. Although each of us has our own opinions about Qumran, it was never our intention to prioritize or promote one view over another. We hope that many arguments have been heard and exchanged. The titles of the papers presented at the conference reflect this intention. Our hope for the future is that this international conference on the archaeology of Qumran and, in particular, the present volume might provide a useful basis for ongoing discussion. Just as with the publication of the scrolls, the continuing effort to publish and assess the material remains of Qumran can only be achieved through coordinated international cooperation. In this respect the collaboration of scholars of different nationalities and background is a welcome sign.

#### IV

The conference and the publication of the present proceedings would not have been possible without the help and assistance of the numerous individuals and institutions that we would like to acknowledge. First of all, we thank our authors who not only made the effort to present their research during the conference, but also submitted their articles to this volume. We also extend our gratitude to the faculty members at the Center for Old World Archaeology and Art at Brown University, Martha Sharp Joukowsky, R. Ross Holloway, and Rolf Winkes for their support and encouragement; the administrator of the Center, Beth Googins; as well as its many undergraduate and graduate students who tremendously helped

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